

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

N. Y. STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

At the Annual Meeting, Albany, February 14, 1861,

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BY BENJAMIN N. HUNTINGTON.

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OF THE

NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

AT ALBANY, FEBRUARY 14, 1861,

By BENJAMIN. N. HUNTINGTON, President,

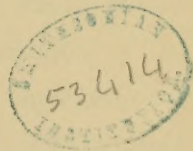
AND

ADDRESS BY GEORGE GEDDES,

ON TAKING THE CHAIR AS PRESIDENT ELECT.



PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.



ALBANY:

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1861.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN:—We have met, at the close of another year, for the purpose of receiving from the Board of Officers, a Report of their proceedings since our last Annual Meeting. On that occasion, our worthy President, on leaving the Chair, gave a very full account of the transactions of the Society to that time; it will not, therefore, be necessary for me to allude to anything that transpired previous to that meeting, and only to glance summarily over our proceedings since that time. The very full Reports of our acting Secretary, Col. Johnson, and Treasurer, Mr. Tucker, who have so faithfully performed their duties, will show you, in detail, the operations of the officers during the year. We leave the Society in a prosperous condition,—nothing having occurred, in any manner, to detract from its usefulness.

Providence has signally smiled upon us: the husbandman has been rewarded for his labor by

an unusually abundant harvest; rains have been plenteous, the weather propitious; and, our old meadows and pastures have, to a great extent, recovered from the effects of the drought that visited many portions of our State the preceding year. We are enabled, from our full granaries, to supply in part, the European demand, and also the cry for aid from a suffering sister State.

During the fall of 1859, and winter and spring of 1860, a disease, called Pleuro Pneumonia, made its appearance among herds of cattle in some portions of the neighboring State of Massachusetts, which was introduced by means of cattle imported from Holland, by Mr. Chenery, of Belmont, on the 29th of May, 1859, and during the year, Mr. C. lost thirty head of cattle by the disease. Commissioners were appointed by the Legislature of that State, under whose direction eight hundred and forty-two head of cattle were ordered to be killed; only one hundred and eighty-five of them proved to be diseased, while six hundred and fifty-seven were found to be healthy, although they had been exposed to contagion or infection from the unsound animals. Owing to the prompt action of the Commissioners, in prohibiting the export of animals from the State,

and from other precautions adopted, the disease is believed not to have crossed the Connecticut river. The Secretary and Treasurer of this Society, accompanied by Professor Porter, made two visits to the infected districts in order to ascertain the peculiarities of the disease, and made a lengthy Report, with reference thereto, which appeared in our extra Journal, published June 21st, 1860. Our Board of Officers, at their meeting of that date, after adopting sundry resolutions, authorized the President and Secretary to appoint one or more persons, practically conversant with the disease, who could make examinations with reference to the disease, and be consulted in case it should make its appearance in our State. In conformity with the resolution, Dr. Copeman, of Utica, and Dr. Moore, of Poughkeepsie, both Veterinary Surgeons, were appointed,—and several able articles have been written by them, with reference to its management.

NOTE.—During the Annual Meeting of the Society, Dr. COPEMAN, one of the Veterinary Surgeons appointed by the Officers of the Society, stated, that he had been called to examine a herd of milch cows opposite the city in Rensselaer county, and found undoubted evidence of the prevalence of the disease. Its origin is not satisfactorily ascertained. He gave such directions as to the treatment and separation of the animals, and fumigating the stables, that if faithfully attended to, will probably prevent the spread of the disease.

The Annual Fair was located at Elmira, and held at that place the first week in October last, in accordance with a recommendation adopted at our last Annual Meeting,—all the requirements of the Board having been complied with, before the location was definitely settled. The arrangements have, at no previous Fair, been more perfect,—and every desired facility was rendered to the officers, in the discharge of their duties, by the citizens of that place; the buildings, horse and cattle stalls, and pens for sheep, swine, &c., were ample,—but all would have been occupied, and more needed, had the weather been favorable. The show of Stock was not as large as at some of our previous Exhibitions, but the quality of the animals shown,—especially the cattle, sheep and swine,—have never been excelled at any of our Fairs. The implements, also, were worthy of great commendation. I noticed among them, several newly invented articles that must prove highly beneficial to our Agricultural population.

The Hon. William H. Seward, while traveling in Syria, during the year 1859, was presented with three horses of the Arabian breed, viz: a bay stallion, six years old; a sorrel colt, two years old, and a mare; the two, first named,

arrived safely, in August, 1860; the mare died on the passage. Gov. Seward has placed the horses in charge of the officers of the Society, who have made arrangements with Messrs. C. W. Bathgate & Co., of Fordham, Westchester county, for their use and keeping. The horse was an attractive and interesting feature of the Exhibition. A Committee was appointed to examine him, who, through their Chairman, the Hon. John A. King, reported as to his qualities,—which Report is published on page 57, of the Society's Journal of October, 1860. It is hoped that the breed of horses, in the State, may be improved by this accession.

I considered myself fortunate, in being able to obtain Mr. Quincy's consent to deliver the Annual Address; it was delivered the last day of the Fair, to a large audience, and contained many valuable ideas and suggestions.

The weather, during the entire week, with the exception of one day, was rainy—which detracted much from the attendance; but you will judge, from the Treasurer's Report, that the usual interest was felt in the Exhibition.

I cannot speak from experience, on the subject of Market Fairs,—however, I deem them worthy of consideration. On the 17th of October, 1860,

under the direction of the Farmers' Club, of Bedford, at Katonah, Westchester county, a Market Fair was held, for the exhibition, sale and exchange of animals and implements of all descriptions, domestic and other goods,—a full Report of which, appeared in the November number of the Journal; and I have still further learned, from persons who were upon the ground, that it proved a successful enterprise. Would it not be advantageous, for those engaged in the promotion of Agriculture, to encourage the holding of these Fairs in their several localities?

Allow me to make some suggestions to Farmers, not original or new,—but often repeated,—nevertheless of great importance, and essential to successful farming. First of all, the underdraining of land deserves more attention than has usually been given to it. While I do not concur with some Farmers, in the opinion that all land requires draining, I do believe, that all close, wet and retentive soils should be thoroughly drained, either with tile or other material, in order that the surface and spring water may pass off quickly. It is impossible, on such lands, (while in an unreclaimed state,) to raise hoed or grain crops with profit; and, although grass may grow luxuriantly,

still it will not possess the sweetness and nutriment it otherwise would, were the soil thoroughly drained.

The selection of proper implements, with which to pulverize the soil before cropping, cannot receive too much attention, and will prove a valuable auxiliary to draining; indeed, the entire labor of Agriculture will be greatly lightened, and its cost curtailed from the use of improved implements and machines.

Increased attention should be paid to the manufacture of manures. I do not think the necessity of this subject is fully appreciated. The gathering of weeds, muck, straw, &c., into heaps for decomposition, is very beneficial in two ways: First, by turning the weeds to some useful purpose,—at the same time destroying them, and leaving the seeds in such condition that they will not vegetate, after going through the heating process of a compost heap. And, a good deal might be said in favor of the soiling system, for feeding cattle during the summer and autumn months, in which way, it is believed that the greatest number of cattle can be kept from the least number of acres, thus increasing the quantity of manure. In order to carry out this system more perfectly,

a portion of the farm, well adapted for the purpose, should be set apart and prepared for the raising of roots, which add greatly to the quantity as well as the quality of their food for the winter months. The saving of the urine of the cattle, in cisterns constructed for that purpose, would prove a very great addition to the fertilizers of the farm, especially to the meadows and upland pastures. Bone-dust, super-phosphate of lime, guano, blood and wool manure, and sundry other manufactured manures, can be advantageously used in the raising of crops,—always selecting such as can be most profitably used for each crop.

Agricultural Education is an all important subject, and commends itself to the attention of the American Farmer. In the year 1858, there were, in Europe, three hundred and fifty-two Colleges and Schools in which Agriculture was taught; and, the knowledge obtained in-doors, practically applied in cultivating farms attached to the institutions,—thus giving the Scholar a Scientific and Practical Agricultural Education. A thorough knowledge of the studies taught in these institutions, will enable the Farmer to select the kind of land, on his farm, best adapted to each crop to be raised, as well as the proper mode of treating such crop; and, also, to analyze soils, and ascer-

tain what manure can be with most profit applied; he will also be enabled to pursue, successfully, the rotation system for cropping, which is strongly recommended in English works. Thus far, comparatively little attention has been paid to this branch of learning, in this country. In some of our Colleges, Professorships of Agriculture have been endowed, thus conceding the knowledge of this subject essential. There are Agricultural Colleges in operation, in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Iowa, and Agricultural Schools in several of the other States; and, an auspicious day is dawning for the Farmers of New York. We may now say that we have an Agricultural College, which, from present indications, must prove successful. That portion of the New York State Agricultural College Building, (located at Ovid, Seneca county,) which has been put under contract, having been completed, the institution was opened for pupils, on the 5th of December last; and, although still in its infancy, I have great confidence that this institution will be an honor to our State, and one, of which we may be justly proud. I have reason to believe, that the old prejudice against the Agricultural knowledge contained in books, will cease, and,

that our Farmers will become, more and more, a class of reading men. We have now a goodly list of Agricultural periodicals, both weekly and monthly,—many of them ably conducted, and which, if extensively read, would be the means of diffusing much valuable information, which, but for them, would often perish with its authors, or be confined to localities. Allow me to suggest the forming of clubs, in each school district, for subscriptions to our Agricultural Journals,—the cheapness of which, to clubs of ten, fifteen or twenty subscribers, as offered by the publishers, renders it consistent with the means of almost every Farmer.

I will not detain you longer, gentlemen, but before closing, must express my thanks to the Executive Board, for the courtesy extended to me throughout the year; their regular attendance at our monthly meetings, has materially lightened my labors; and, too much praise cannot be awarded to our untiring Secretary, who, by his efforts, has kept all the affairs of the Society so thoroughly systematized.

I now have the pleasure of introducing to you the Hon. George Geddes, who has been elected President of this Society, for the ensuing year.

REMARKS
OF
GEORGE GEDDES,
THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT,
ON TAKING THE CHAIR.

GENTLEMEN OF THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY:—I assume the duties of this place in obedience to your action, not at all in accordance with my own pleasure. I have been content to be a learner in the Society, and feel earnest diffidence at being placed at its head.

I know what the Society has done for the State. The past is secure,—what shall be in the future, I do not predict. The Society has done for the State of New York, or rather the State of New York has done through the Society, more, in its sphere of duty, than has been accomplished by any other Government, with so little expense.

The Society has risen in calm and quiet progress; the law that organized it, has but few sections. It did but give it a legal form and existence. It has moved in its own strength. The public spirit of the localities where its Fairs have been held, has provided for them.

In relation to those Fairs, I have not had the advantages of comparison, by foreign travel; but the last Fair which I saw, (the one at Albany,) I believe to have been the best representation upon a single field, of more value and excellence than has been elsewhere gathered.

Since you have been pleased to make me your President, I have looked around to inquire into its responsibilities.

This Society owes its success to its Executive Committee,—not so much to its President as to that Committee. In them you have been exceedingly fortunate. Gentlemen who have been many years with us, have acted there. Some have retired, whose absence I very much regret. I would like the assistance of their practical knowledge, and I dislike to part from friends so thoroughly tested.

I thank you for the honor you have done me, in this appointment. Were I ungrateful, I should be

indiscriminating. Accepting it with diffidence, and asking your indulgence, I turn to the Executive Committee, and ask them to do to me as to my predecessor,—to attend all the meetings, and, if possible, to make this a year of success.

MAR. 15, 1896.

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